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Backplane

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This article is an expansion based on a canon element. For canon information on this topic, follow the link to The Witcher Wiki: **Land_of_a_Thousand_Fables**.

This fan-fiction article, **Backplane**, was written by Witcher190. Please do not edit this fiction without the writer's permission.

"If you've ever wondered what happens to the realms created by expert illusionist mages once their spells begin to lose stability, the answer is nothing more and nothing less than a backplane."

—Finn Thordvison, Mage

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What is a Backplane? ✏

A backplane can refer to three distinct phenomena:

- **Deteriorating Demiplane**: The most common understanding of a backplane is the state a demiplane enters as magical entropy sets in. When an complex illusion created by a mage loses stability, it begins to twist and warp, often taking on a more menacing or surreal tone. A backplane is essentially a byproduct of fading magic that can no longer maintain its original form. The shift from a stable, cohesive demiplane to an unstable backplane can be gradual or sudden, depending on the complexity of the original spells and the power of the mage who created it.
- **Small, Hidden Planes of Existence**: In cosmological theory, a backplane is thought to be a small, hidden plane connected to other realities. These elusive places are often associated with mythic realms, like the Isle of Avalon or the Isle of Mists. They serve as intersections between two spheres.
- **Surviving Fragments of Destroyed Realities**: The third possibility, though unproven, suggests that after a reality is destroyed, fragments of it may continue to exist in the form of a backplane. These untethered fragments drift in the multiverse, surviving only by the memory of what once was. Such fragments might retain the essence of the original reality, including its physical laws, part of its geography, and even its inhabitants, albeit in a degraded or altered form. However, this theory remains speculative and lacks significant evidence. If these fragments exist, they would be highly unstable and prone to further disintegration.

Origin of Backplanes ✏

The key difference between a backplane and a demiplane lies in the source of their creation and the strength behind their existence. A demiplane is often sustained by powerful entities—such as demons or genies—capable of maintaining its stability for eons. These entities possess vast reserves of energy, allowing them to hold their created realities together almost indefinitely. The stability of such demiplanes is directly tied to the will and power of these beings, making them nearly indestructible as long as their creators remain invested in their existence.

Mages, however, do not possess this level of raw power. Although highly skilled illusionists can create entire demiplanes using advanced magic, these realms are ultimately temporary. The very nature of illusion magic requires constant maintenance and attention. Over time, the spell begins to lose cohesion, and magical entropy sets in, leading to the formation of a backplane. This deterioration is inevitable unless the original creator or another mage intervenes to restore the demiplane's stability.

In societies where magic is prevalent, demiplanes are often created for specific purposes,

such as:

- **Infinite Storage**: Entire demiplanes can be fashioned as endless warehouses for supplies, archives of knowledge, or vast repositories of resources. These storage realms are magically expanded to accommodate vast quantities of materials without the limitations of physical space.
- **Trash Dumps**: Some demiplanes are used as places to dispose of waste—both physical and magical—that could be hazardous in the material world. These realms are often chaotic, filled with discarded magical experiments, cursed items, and other dangerous refuse. The accumulation of volatile magical waste can accelerate the degradation of these demiplanes, leading to the formation of backplanes filled with unpredictable magical effects and hazardous entities.
- **Prisons**: Infinite prisons, sealed off from the material world, are often used to trap dangerous entities, such as lesser demons from which a mage could extract power in the same way that with a trapped genie. These prisons are designed with intricate magical wards and barriers to prevent escape. Some are created with shifting landscapes and disorienting illusions to keep their inmates perpetually confused and disoriented. The power extracted from these prisoners can sometimes be used to sustain the prison itself, but if the energy wanes, the demiplane may begin to degrade into a backplane.
- **Sanctums**: Mages, especially those in the upper echelons of society, often create private demiplanes as sanctuaries—places where they can conduct experiments, store their most valuable items, or simply retreat from the world. These sanctums are often heavily guarded and warded against intrusions. The architecture and landscapes within these sanctums reflect the personality and preferences of their creators. When abandoned or forgotten, however, the magic sustaining these sanctums begins to fray, and they may transform into backplanes filled with distorted echoes of the mage's presence and intentions.

In all these instances, the demiplane is designed with a clear purpose. However, when a demiplane is abandoned or left without proper magical upkeep, it begins to degrade. Left to the whims of magical entropy, these demiplanes transform into backplanes. The transition from a demiplane to a backplane can be sudden or gradual, depending on the strength of the original spells.

Characteristics of a Backplane ✎

Backplanes possess several unique characteristics that distinguish them from both demiplanes and other magical spaces:

- **Illusions Become Tangible**: While demiplanes created by demonic or other powerful entities are almost real in themselves, backplanes formed from advanced illusion magic have a peculiar way of manifesting tangible objects in the material world. These objects are practically indistinguishable from real ones—visually and functionally—but they often have a bitter taste (except for food) and tend to decompose faster than normal items.

This odd tangibility is a defining trait of a backplane, blurring the line between illusion and reality. The process by which these objects become tangible is not fully understood but seems to involve the crystallization of residual magic into physical forms.

- **Time Distortion**: Time within a backplane often passes at a dramatically different rate than in the material world. In many backplanes, one week inside can be equivalent to only two or three hours in the real world. Therefore, a month in the backplane could equate to only eight hours outside. However, this time distortion is not uniform across all backplanes; it is more prevalent in those created with specific intent, such as the famous fablesphere designed by the illusionist Artorius Vigo. In other backplanes, the passage of time may fluctuate wildly or follow no discernible pattern. This time distortion can lead to strange and sometimes dangerous effects, as inhabitants of a backplane may age rapidly or find themselves disoriented upon returning to the material world.

- **Entropic Decay and Elementals**: Like all magical constructs, backplanes are not immune to entropy, but in these realms, the effects of entropy take on a unique form. As a backplane begins to decay, the illusion twists, warps, and becomes increasingly distorted. Entire landscapes may shift from serene to grotesque, and once benign illusions may turn hostile. Additionally, as the backplane decays, elemental entities may manifest within it. These elementals often resemble those found in the Elemental and Para-Elemental Planes in their basic structure but differ in appearance and behavior, being unique to their respective backplane. Most of them, created from ether magic, can be considered Ether Elementals or, in some cases, a type of spirit.

In some instances, these elementals may find ways to escape into the material world, fueled by the entropy of their decaying home. Similarly, designed elemental entities, such as pixies or other guardians, may also break free as the magical boundaries weaken. This makes backplanes not only unpredictable but also potentially dangerous.

Location of Backplanes ✎

Backplanes, like all demiplanes created by mages and other beings, exist in a realm beyond the material world. When a mage opens a portal to teleport, they briefly pass through what is known as the Ether Plane. All this mage-created demiplanes are located in this Ether Plane, which goes by many names: Quintessence, the Fifth Element, Spirit, Idea, or simply Ether.

The Ether Plane is the building block of souls and other ethereal beings. It is a strange and alien realm where time, heat, light, and matter do not exist in the traditional sense. It is in this timeless, spaceless realm that illusionary magic is easiest to maintain. Here, even the most elaborate and intricate illusions can last far longer than they would in the material world. So, when a person accesses an enchanted book that transports them to a demiplane/backplane, they are, in fact, accessing a fragment of the Ether Plane that has been shaped by humanoid hands.

Because these demiplanes/backplanes exist within the Ether Plane, it may be possible for someone trapped in a backplane to travel from one backplane to another, potentially finding a way back to the material world without losing their sanity, as they would by being exposed to

the Ether Plane in full. However, navigating through a backplane is fraught with challenges and dangers. The unstable nature of these realms means that landscapes and structures can change unpredictably. What appears to be a safe path one moment might transform into a treacherous maze the next. Moreover, the inhabitants of a backplane, whether they are remnants of the original demiplane or newly formed entities born from the magical entropy, can be hostile or unpredictable.
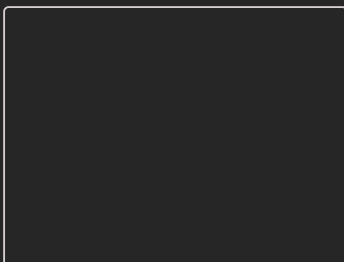
Trivia ✎

- The idea was to create an expansion to explain the fablesphere of The Witcher 3: Blood and Wine. It was partially inspired by this Reddit post Creative challenge - Write about the backrooms in D&D.

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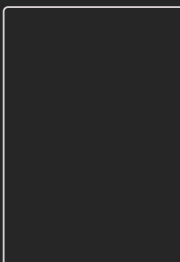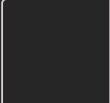
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